United Nations S/PV.7959

Security Council

Seventy-second year

Provisional

7959th meeting
Tuesday, 6 June 2017, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Morales Ayma	(Bolivia (Plurinational State of))
Members:	China	Mr. Liu Jieyi
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	Ethiopia	Mr. Alemu
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Italy	Ms. Velo
	Japan	Mr. Bessho
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Ashikbayev
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Senegal	Mr. Guèye
	Sweden	Ms. Lövin
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Mr. Klein
	Uruguay	Mr. Rosselli

Agenda

Maintenance of international peace and security

Preventive diplomacy and transboundary waters

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Expression of condolences over the recent terrorist attacks

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to take this opportunity to express my most heartfelt condolences to the families, the Governments and the nations of all of the victims of the recent terrorist attacks.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Maintenance of international peace and security

Preventive diplomacy and transboundary waters

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to warmly welcome the Secretary-General, ministers and other representatives present at today's meeting. Their participation is an affirmation of the importance of the subject matter under discussion.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I now give the floor to the Secretary-General.

The Secretary-General (*spoke in Spanish*): Water, peace and security are inextricably linked. With demand for freshwater projected to grow by more than 40 per cent by the middle of the century, and with climate change having a growing impact, water scarcity is a growing concern.

By 2050, at least one in four people will live in a country where the lack of fresh water is chronic or recurrent. Strains on water access are already rising in all regions. Without effective management of our water resources, we risk intensified disputes between communities and sectors and even increased tensions among nations.

Three-quarters of United Nations Member States share lakes or river basins with their neighbours. Important river basins, such as the Nile, the Indus, the Ganges, the Euphrates-Tigris and the Mekong provide a lifeline for the economy, trade, culture and livelihoods of surrounding communities. All told, there are more than 270 internationally shared river basins that serve as the primary source of fresh water for approximately 40 per cent of the world's population. That is why it is essential that nations cooperate to ensure that water is shared equitably and used sustainably.

Indeed, water has proven to be a catalyst for cooperation among nations, even those that are not on good terms. In the second half of the twentieth century alone, 287 international water agreements were signed. For example, in South America, Lake Titicaca, the largest freshwater lake on the continent, has long been a source of cooperation between Bolivia and Peru. The 1960 Indus Water Treaty between the Government of India and the Government of Pakistan has survived three wars between those two countries. In my own experience, the Albufeira Convention, agreed during my time as Prime Minister of Portugal, continues to promote good relations on water management between Portugal and Spain.

(*spoke in English*)

I should like to make a brief comment on that agreement. During the time of my predecessor, the discussions between the Governments of Portugal and Spain were extremely difficult, and whenever there was the perception that an agreement might be possible there was an uproar in the press of both countries over the question of whether or not the Government were betraying the vital interests of their countries. When I became Prime Minister and José María Aznar became Prime Minister of Spain, we decided that our common interests were far more important than the difficulties in the elaboration of the treaty, and so, with two small teams on both sides, it was possible to quickly achieve something that we both considered to be a reasonable compromise — not a perfect solution for either country but a reasonable compromise.

Until the last moment, the uproar went on and the discussions in the media were furious about this issue, but the proof that political will is decisive is that the agreement was signed and, from that moment onwards, the discussion completely stopped. Things are working perfectly between the two countries, with enormous benefits, namely, in the common management of the rivers — allowing, for instance, floods to have a much less devastating impact than in the past. Something that had looked almost impossible became easy when there was the political will to do it, and once there was the political will to do it nobody paid a price. On the contrary, everybody benefited. I think that this is a lesson that can be used in many other parts of the world where people are afraid to go the extra mile to reach an agreement with a neighbour or with a partner.

Elsewhere in Europe, the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes has fostered collaboration and conflict resolution since 1992. As of March last year, the Convention became open to all United Nations Member States, offering the opportunity to create a global framework for preventive diplomacy for dealing with transboundary water issues.

The United Nations actively promotes mediation and dialogue as effective tools for preventing and resolving disputes over water and other natural resources. For example, the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia is collaborating closely with the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea and other partners to build capacity in water diplomacy and to modernize the regional legal framework on the management of transboundary water resources. I look forward to visiting the Aral Sea in the coming days. While there, I will discuss with all five Governments of Central Asia how the United Nations is supporting mediation to prevent and resolve local and transboundary disputes over water in Central Asia and elsewhere. We stand ready to engage in preventative diplomacy and promote dialogue and mediation on natural resources and other issues wherever and whenever necessary.

Last year, the High-level Panel on Water, convened by former Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the President of the World Bank, produced an action plan that champions a comprehensive, inclusive and collaborative way of developing and managing water resources, and improving water- and sanitation-related services.

The United Nations has also published a guide containing practical strategies and best practices in the area of water diplomacy As we work to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on climate change, we will expand on these initiatives. I commend this Security Council meeting for highlighting how water is and should remain a reason for cooperation, not conflict. Let us commit to investing in water security to ensure durable peace and security for all communities and nations.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Secretary-General for his briefing.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

I wish to thank the Secretary-General for participating in this meeting of the Security Council. The Council has the important responsibility to maintain peace and safety. Now more than ever, we should work to build bridges and not walls and to promote popular dialogue and diplomacy to solve all our conflicts for the benefit of life.

It is an honour for me to preside over this meeting. I should like to share some reflections on a theme that affects and commits to life, the welfare of all people and the balance and subsistence of our Mother Earth. I refer to water. This topic has an important impact on the maintenance of international peace and security. Our planet, the human family and life on Earth are experiencing a water crisis that will intensify in the coming decades. According to data provided by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, the planet will have a global population of approximately 10 billion people by 2050, which will require a 50-per cent increase in the demand for food. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, by that same year the demand for water will have increased by 54 per cent. If consumer patterns hold, two-thirds of the world population will live with water shortages by 2025.

The situation is very serious. More than 800 million people lack access to drinking water, and more than 2.5 billion do not have access to basic sanitation. According to the United Nations, every day between 800 and 1,000 children under five die of diseases related to lack of access to drinking water and sanitation. It is also enlightening to know that since 1947, 37 conflicts have erupted between States because of water-related issues.

I wish to thank the United Nations and highlight the role it plays through its agencies in addressing this issue, which remains one of the most important challenges to humankind. In that regard, 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has deepened our understanding of the need to achieve universal access to water and sanitation that is equitable for all humankind.

Additionally, States have the obligation to manage, responsibly and an integrated manner, water resources at all levels, including transboundary waters, under the principle of cooperation. In 2010, I proposed, on behalf of my country, that the General Assembly declare the access to water a human right so as to promote its enforcement and to gradually ensure its universal recognition and application. At its sixty-fourth session,

in July 2010, the General Assembly adopted resolution 64/292, which recognized drinking water and basic sanitation as a human right that is essential to the full enjoyment of life and of all other rights. In that regard, we continue to put forward our proposals so that all basic services are eventually declared human rights.

Unlike other resources for which alternatives can be found, such as oil, clean water does not have a substitute. There is no life without water. There are now 7 billion people using the same available sources of water — a limited, vulnerable and scarce resource that we must use judiciously. I come from a country with many indigenous peoples who live in rural areas. Our people have always considered water to be the source of life and a public good that belongs to everyone, not just to one set of people in particular. It a nutrient that Mother Earth produces and should be respected and conserved.

With regard to water, our peoples and communities were treated unfairly during the colonial era, as well as in the more recent republican era. We were not consulted about how the water was to be used, and that affected our rights to our land and other natural resources. The essential value of water as a social and cultural good and its link with our own identity was disregarded. During the neoliberal phase in my country — and I state this in all sincerity — the drinking water supply was privatized, as greater emphasis was placed on profits. The increasing needs of cities could not be met. Costs increased, which led to protests to have it returned to the control of the State. Against that backdrop, in their new Constitution of 2009, the people of Bolivia agreed that natural resources are strategic resources and belong to the public. They fall under the direct, indivisible and imprescriptible control of the people. We also stipulated that water is a fundamental right and vital to life; it is an indispensable resource that allows humankind to live in harmony with Mother Earth.

We are facing a complex water crisis that leads to the emergence of new challenges, which traditional water-management polices and modalities are ill-equipped to address — for example, the fact that water is considered to be a human right and not a private business or commodity. It defies logic that water is subjected to market conditions that focus on its use as opposed to it being freely accessible and universal; the urgent need to identify priorities for its use for vital purposes and to earmark increased available funds for water and basic sanitation infrastructure to shore up the global deficit of financing for water projects — which contrasts sharply with exorbitant military spending — its impact on human and economic development, its many uses, protection of the environment and respect for the cultural values of communities.

Similarly, we must point out that the vast majority of the world's most important reservoirs are currently being overused and are at risk of being polluted. A high percentage of fresh water sources are shared by two or more States, while agreements do not always exist as to their origin, ownership or use, thereby causing conflict that should, more or less, become opportunities for effective collaboration. According to the United Nations, there are 276 transboundary water basins in the world — 60 in Africa, 68 in Europe, 46 in North America and 38 in South America. Two hundred and fifty-six of those basins — 92.7 per cent of them — are shared by two, three or four countries. Twenty of those basins — 7.2 per cent — are shared by five or more countries. We are all closely linked by water. Traditional water-management policies are the result of the effects of climate change and have exposed a crisis that spark new local, regional and global tensions, which jeopardize the peace and security of nations. They are clearly important because the Security Council has already addressed the complexity of the topic on multiple occasions. Developments in international water law, which is a key component in the United Nations system, encourages new paradigms to be identified and adopted, with a view to promoting more effective water management. Water conflicts can then be resolved through renewed effective preventive diplomacy of transboundary waters. Since 1947, three hundred international conventions on water have been agreed.

As the Secretary-General mentioned, the United Nations was established to prevent wars. Increasing competition for resources in recent times means that the focus is on preventing conflicts and sustaining peace. The water crisis we face is one of the greatest threats posed to life on the planet. The organs of the United Nations, on the basis of their respective mandates, must redouble their efforts so that together we can stymie that threat. In that regard, I would like to share a few observations with the Council, which will, no doubt, be built upon today and in future debates.

First, water is vital to sustaining the life of all people and living beings and for maintaining balance

on Mother Earth. Water is shared but vulnerable universal heritage.

Second, fresh water is limited and cannot be replaced. As such, all of its sources must be conserved and safeguarded against pollution, the effects of climate change and overuse in activities that are not essential.

Third, the fresh water available is found in areas that are shared internationally. Its use must pave the way for opportunities that promote collaboration, interaction and harmony among peoples, not that spark conflicts surrounding its origin, ownership or use. Water jeopardizes peace and security among peoples; it must not be the cause of domestic or international conflicts.

Fourth, water must bring together all States, nations, communities, peoples, social movements and individuals so that together they can share their concerns and knowledge, reach consensus and develop more effective and collaborative water-management policies.

Fifth, water has inspired the development of new instruments of international law that incorporate principles surrounding its use, conservation, cooperation efforts, the sharing of information and technology and focus on its use for vital purposes, which all deserve States' full attention.

Sixth, water should inspire a new global awareness, with a view to protecting and conserving the resource for future generations, while ensuring its universal access and seeking to avoid conflicts.

Seventh, States should consider entering into governance agreements that emphasize the sustainability of transboundary water resources and provide for the establishment of institutional mechanisms that ensure the reasonable use of such resources.

Eighth, States have a duty to actively and permanently cooperate with each other. They should provide timely information on any significant changes emanating from the use of transboundary water resources.

Ninth, States should refrain from adopting unilateral measures that endanger or affect the rights of other States with which they share transboundary water resources.

Finally, as the Charter of the United Nations establishes, States have an obligation to seek solutions to their disputes through negotiation, investigation, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, recourse to regional agreements and organizations and other peaceful means, such as good offices. Where water flows, peace must also flow.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate.

Ms. Lövin (Sweden): Let me first express my condolences and those of the Swedish Government and people on the loss of life following the vicious and cowardly attacks in Kabul and London. Our thoughts are first and foremost with the families of those who lost loved ones and those who are now recovering from their injuries. We share the shock and outrage of the British and Afghan peoples and I assure them that Sweden stands with them at this time.

Moving on to the subject of today's discussion, I would like to thank Bolivia for putting the issue of preventive diplomacy and transboundary waters on the agenda. Water is one of the essential building blocks of human life. Without it, nothing can survive. I also thank the Secretary-General for his insightful and thought-provoking statement. He underlined for us the challenges and opportunities presented by transboundary waters. He also underscored the vital importance of preventive diplomacy as a tool for averting conflict and fostering cooperation through water management.

Today's meeting coincides with another important meeting focused on water, specifically on our seas and oceans. Sweden is proud to co-host the Oceans Conference with Fiji, which started yesterday. We believe that the Conference can be a game changer and lead to a reversal in the decline of the oceans to the benefit of people, the planet and prosperity.

The topic at hand is vital and urgent. The effects of climate change are real. They are being felt every day, not least by those who depend on rivers, lakes, seas and oceans to sustain their lives and livelihoods. Sweden is not excluded from such concerns. We are currently facing unprecedented low groundwater levels in parts of our country, which is affecting countrywide water supply levels almost throughout the entire contry. It is imperative that we all respond to the challenge by raising the level of our global ambition to meet our global responsibility.

Sweden is deeply and fully committed to the prevention agenda being pursued by the Secretary-General, which the Council discussed it in January (see S/PV.7857). Such commitment to a more holistic approach to prevention builds on an acknowledgment of the many varied and interlinked drivers of conflict. The issue of the management of transboundary waters is an important example. A large proportion of the world's population depends upon shared water resources for domestic, agricultural and industrial uses. How shared water is managed between communities has a profound effect on all aspects of human life, as well as economic growth and sustainable development. Considering its importance, it is not surprising that shared waters can also be a source of tension that fuels conflict and threatens peace. The negative effects of climate change have the potential to increase such tensions. To quote the Secretary-General,

> "climate change is a threat in itself and a multiplier of many other threats — from poverty to displacement to conflict".

In response, we need to support countries' efforts to make informed and efficient decisions when responding to the effects of climate change, including on transboundary waters. The United Nations needs an institutional home for the security risks related to climate change that are already affecting countries. Such a home would ensure that the United Nations has the skills set needed to provide adequate risk assessments and deliver comprehensive risk-management strategies with regard to the impact of climate change. Together with increased capacity for more integrated, cross-pillar analysis, such work would also provide the early warning needed to support the Council's work to prevent conflicts from emerging. That need was underlined in March with the adoption of resolution 2349 (2017).

Improving the management of water resources so as to ensure water security must be a top priority at global, regional and national levels. We simply cannot afford not to responsibly and sustainably manage our waters. Issues of shared waters can and must be turned into opportunities for cooperation. Doing so can help prevent conflicts and deliver positive outcomes for all communities across borders. We have a number of tools at hand to support such efforts.

First, international law relating to water, which sets out key principles around prevention and avoiding transboundary harm, can play a significant role in preventing conflict. The Aarhus Convention is an important instrument for ensuring the participation of the public and non-governmental organizations in environmental decision-making. In that regard, it is important that the rights of indigenous peoples be recognized, taken into account and included in decisions regarding water resources.

Secondly, regional actors have a crucial role to play. As the Secretary-General underlined, Europe has a long history of managing shared waters. We have developed extensive systems for transboundary water governance, including an overreaching treaty framework. The European Union has lessons to share in that regard. So, too, has Sweden, where we have made efforts to gain experience in the area of water diplomacy for the benefit of all countries. The Stockholm International Water Institute and the UNESCO International Centre for Water Cooperation and Global Water Partnership, which is hosted by Sweden, hold extensive knowledge pertaining to transboundary water and actively engage in water management dialogues.

Finally, we should enhance and deepen our efforts to work together around transboundary waters. Cooperation needs to be extended beyond managing a shared resource to the areas of increasing the quality of water and protecting the environment. Cooperation over shared waters can have far-reaching positive impact and build trust far beyond the issue of managing a shared resource, which further reduces the risk of conflict.

The waters that we share — whether rivers, lakes, seas or oceans — sustain life and support our common prosperity. However, they are coming under threat more and more. No country acting alone can respond. Instead, we must work together as partners across borders in order to secure our shared future and protect our planet for everyone.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the Minister of Fisheries and Maritime Economy of Senegal.

Mr. Guéye (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): I should like at the outset, Sir, to say what an honour and a pleasure it is for the Senegalese delegation to see you personally presiding over this meeting of the Security Council, which you decided to devote to the important issue of transboundary waters and preventive diplomacy. That decision has made it possible for the Council to consider, for the third time in 14 months, the issue of water and its relationship with peace, in the wake of the

Arria Formula meeting held on 22 April 2016, under the effective presidency of Mr. Macky Sall, President of the Republic of Senegal, and the open debate held on 22 November 2016 (see S/PV.7818), presided over by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Senegal abroad, Mr. Mankeur Ndiaye.

The fact that this body has met three times, with growing interest on the part of Member States and in such a short time, on this issue is an affirmation, if such were needed, that this is a relevant topic. We would highlight also the well-considered decision made by our respective countries, Senegal last year and Bolivia today, to consider this issue from the perspective of prevention, which the Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres — whom I thank for his important statement — decided to place on the list of absolute priorities within the framework of the maintenance of international peace and security.

It can never be said often enough: the continued scarcity of water resources, together with their unequal distribution throughout the world, leaves us no room for inaction. In fact, given rapid demographic growth, runaway urbanization, the worrying issue of global warming and the increasing need to invest in hydraulics, the question of access to water is today more burning than ever in a world where 60 per cent of water resources are located in nine countries.

This frightening state of affairs requires a paradigm shift on the issue of water in order to set in motion a preventive approach that is based on two major pillars: cooperation, in order to ensure access to water resources and mediation, in order to resolve differences among States.

We believe, therefore, that the goal is no longer simply to make clear how water is related to peace and security, or the fact that we need to prevent water-related conflicts, but, rather, how to share experiences of successful cooperation. That is why it is my pleasure to talk to the Council about the Senegal River Basin Development Organization (OMVS), which represents a success story in the area of the joint management of transboundary waters. Given the serious consequences of the severe droughts of the 1970s, three countries — Senegal, Mali and Mauritania — guided by the ideals of solidarity, sharing, fairness and peace, decided in March 1972 to adopt a forward-looking vision that resulted in the creation of the OMVS, successor to the Senegal River Riparian States Organization.

Those three founding countries, joined in 2006 by the Republic of Guinea, defined what has become known as the Water Charter, which is based on the idea that since water is a rare commodity and therefore potentially an object of conflict, it must be shared on the basis of its uses, not among member States, so as to ensure joint management of the basin in a spirit of solidarity.

This resource-sharing among uses is based on the following principles: the obligation to ensure a balanced management of water resources; the fair and reasonable use of river water; the obligation to preserve the environment; the obligation to negotiate in case of conflict; and the obligation for each riparian State to inform other riparian States before undertaking any action or project that could have an impact on the availability of water, or about the possibility of implementing a future project.

This vision was very forward-looking because the Charter, well before its time, established the principle of "polluter pays" and grants representatives of users, territorial communes, non-governmental organizations and decentralized management committees observer status within the Standing Commission on Water. In doing so, OMVS member States ensured access to water for riparian communities and enabled them to invest in energy, agriculture and transport while promoting good-neighbourly relations in the region.

It is in that same spirit that Senegal will be undertaking its presidency of OMVS after the election on 17 May of President Macky Sall to preside over the Conference of Heads of State and Government for the upcoming two years.

President Sall intends to modernize the organization at an accelerated rate and implement new projects in the area of energy and the navigability of the river, and to promote inclusive cooperation in a spirit of solidarity so as to ensure that the Senegal river unites and does not divide riparian countries.

Historically, as we know, rivers have been the cradle of great civilizations, and we should never lose sight of this historic role if we wish water and transboundary waters in particular to continue playing a uniting role. But knowing the geostrategic challenges surrounding this resource, we cannot exclude the threat of future conflicts concerning water. In this light, the Council has no other option but to turn to prevention.

It is therefore important to promote cooperation in the management of transboundary water resources, which would make it possible to guarantee peace and provide for the interests of all. But for this, the international community must muster the political will to strengthen its mediation capacity, in particular by helping the existing cooperation framework or, where there is a need for it, in helping to establish new ones.

It is all the more necessary to recall, as underscored by Mr. Danilo Türk, President of the Global High-level Panel on Water and Peace, in the Council last November, in saying that of the 263 international watercourses, only 84 have joint management institutions, and many are inefficient.

It is our common responsibility, therefore, to promote a mediation that is complementary to cooperation, particularly within the framework of the United Nations, three quarters of whose Members share watercourses with their neighbours.

We wish also to welcome the outstanding work done by the Secretariat, in particular the Department of Political Affairs, and to thank them for their valuable support for their mediation efforts throughout the world. Given all of these efforts, we wish to seize this opportunity to invite the Security Council, the guarantor of international security, to take a careful look at the issue of transboundary waters in order to strengthen its conflict-prevention efforts. Make no mistake, the future of preventive diplomacy lies in cooperation. Given the multiplicity and interrelatedness of existing security challenges, our motto should remain that of preventive multilateralism.

That message is exactly what the Senegalese initiative on water, peace and security is trying to promote. It seeks to show that, with the support of the international community, countries can be helped to replace competition for access to water — a source of conflict — with cooperation around this strategic resource, and, in that way, prevent conflicts and strengthen relations between States.

Finally, it remains for me to reiterate the unwavering commitment of Senegal to continue its efforts to prevent water-related conflict, and for the the idea of creating a Group of Friends on Water, Peace and Security has emerged and will no doubt soon become a reality.

Mr. Ashikbayev (Kazakhstan): First and foremost, on behalf of the people and the Government of Kazakhstan, I would like to offer our sincerest condolences to Afghanistan and the United Kingdom for the deadly attacks that occurred recently. We would also like to extend our sympathies to the families of the victims and wish the injured a speedy recovery.

My delegation warmly welcomes the distinguished presence in New York of His Excellency Mr. Evo Morales Ayma, President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, and thanks him for his insightful remarks on the relationship between preventive diplomacy and transboundary waters. We also thank the Bolivian presidency for its foresight and proactive action in drawing attention to this important topic, which is in line with the Secretary-General's priorities on preventive diplomacy. My delegation would like to make the following observations and recommendations.

First, threats of transboundary water disputes are very important, as shared water resources flow through different countries. My country defined water security as one of its priorities during its campaign for the non-permanent seat it occupies on the Security Council. Like armed conflicts, water-related conflicts need early action and negotiations. In that regard, I refer to President Nursultan A. Nazarbayev's policy address entitled "Kazakhstan's Concept Vision on Sustaining Global Partnership for a Secure, Just and Prosperous World". The address sets forth numerous principles applicable to averting water-related conflicts. History has proved that there is a causal relationship between water resources and conflict. Water diplomacy and development can therefore save millions of lives. Water is a critical part of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6, which drives all the other SDGs, which are so necessary for peace and prosperity.

Second, water is vital for peace and progress in the Central Asian region. In that regard, we welcome the attention the Secretary-General is paying to the problems of the Aral Sea and water-management issues in general in Central Asia. I would like to remind the Council that the area of the drain bottom of the Aral Sea is around 6 million hectares. Annually, about 100 million tons of salt rise and are carried hundreds or a thousand kilometres away. In that regard, we stand ready to follow up on the outcome of the Secretary-General's visit to the site of one of the largest environmental disasters in the history of humankind, which now directly affects the lives of over 30 million people today and is a threat to the entire world.

As the largest landlocked country in the world, Kazakhstan has never taken water security for granted, and water resources management is high on our agenda. We could experience serious water scarcity in the medium to long term, with significant impacts on our socioeconomic development, with a projected 50 per cent shortage by 2040. With our Central Asian neighbours, we are working on water-related regional arrangements and transboundary water-resources management. We believe that immediate action has to be taken to ensure that freshwater resources are not negatively impacted by climate change, urbanization, population growth and pollution.

We greatly appreciate the efforts of international partners, including the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme, the World Bank, the European Union, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Islamic Development Bank and individual countries, aimed at assisting Central Asian nations to find common ground on water security in the region. We also commend the efforts of the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia in that regard.

Kazakhstan has initiated the creation of a Central Asian investment fund for water projects to co-finance the construction and renovation of water facilities. We have also proposed establishing a regional centre for water security and jointly developing and signing a pact on water and environmental security in Central Asia.

Third, water disputes need early resolution because water flows across legal and political boundaries, thereby increasing the number and categories of potential stakeholders. Boundary-crossing also means that various actors can take recourse in more drastic alternatives with quick results, such as cutting off water supplies, rather than undertaking negotiations. Our third recommendation is therefore to harmonize the interests of upstream and downstream stakeholders, which may vary sharply.

Likewise, and fourth, approaches on water use and effective management must be balanced. Water-resource management should be an issue for discussion and peaceful resolution and not devolve into hostilities. We also require greater emphasis on water data and policy innovations with regard to access to clean water and sanitation.

Fifth, water negotiations must focus on substance and result in mutually beneficial agreements at lower cost and with timely implementation. They must be fair, free, open and inclusive. They must engage women, youth and vulnerable groups. They should be conducted with mutual recognition and respect, leading to joint problem-solving successes.

Sixth, cooperation in transboundary waters should be used as effective confidence-building measures at all levels, from small-scale community and local Government projects to complex regional and international collaborations carried out by Governments, the private sector and civil society at each level.

Seventh, neighbouring countries, regional and subregional organizations and development banks can assist in water disputes as they do in armed conflicts. All national and international legal frameworks and mutually agreed arrangements on international waters, be they bilateral, regional or multilateral, must be respected and implemented by all Member States.

Eighth, the United Nations Inter-Agency Mechanism on All Freshwater Related Issues, Including Sanitation needs to strengthen its capacities to render more effective guidance to Member States, which in turn must implement the recommendations of the High-level Panel on Water. We believe that the global water road map and the SDG 6 Fund need to be strengthened. Member States should be empowered to assist least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States.

Finally, Kazakhstan will work towards a water-secure world, on water-disaster risk reduction and resilience and supports national action and regional and global cooperation for changing the way the world looks at water and how we manage it.

Ms. Velo (Italy) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank the presidency of the Plurinational State of Bolivia for having convened today's briefing, which will contribute in increasing the attention paid to the links between natural resources, climate and security.

(*spoke in English*)

I also wish to thank the Secretary-General for his briefing.

As highlighted on the occasion of the first debate in the Security Council on water, peace and security

last November (see S/PV.7818), water scarcity, together with other megatrends, such as population growth, rapid and chaotic urbanization and food insecurity, can be an instability multiplier and a driver of migration and conflict. The Secretary-General has reminded us of this fact today, as he did last week in his speech on climate action at the Stern School.

I would like to highlight that, in tackling climate change and implementing the 2030 Agenda in a timely manner, the Paris Agreement remains a cornerstone in cooperation among countries. At the same time, transboundary water cooperation is a powerful tool for the long-term prevention of conflicts. We consider today's briefing especially timely because it is taking place in the light of the renewed focus by the Secretary-General on preventive diplomacy, which Italy fully supports, and of the crucial impact of water issues on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustaining Peace Agenda where the nexus between peace, security, development and human rights is clearly established. In that respect, I would like to develop three main points.

First, a global multilateral framework for promoting water cooperation and ensuring the protection and preservation of international watercourses is fundamental, and we have the tools to achieve it. The 1997 Convention on the Law of the Non-navigational Uses of International Watercourses enshrines prevention at its very core. Also, allow me to recall that the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes — the first water convention finalized by United Nations Economic Commission for Europe — was opened last year to all States Members of the United Nations, thereby becoming another effective tool for transboundary water cooperation worldwide. As a party to both of those instruments, Italy strongly encourages their ratification and full implementation by Member States, as they represent a fundamental platform for the further development of regional frameworks and conventions on water cooperation. The International Fresh Water Treaties Database lists over 400 water agreements: they are the most effective benefits-shared alternative to confrontation.

Secondly, Europe has long-standing experience in this field. The Central Commission for the Navigation on the Rhine and the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River are two of the first examples of water-related multilateral frameworks in history. Building on that experience, the European Union has always been committed to promoting water cooperation in other regions of the world.

Thirdly, I would like to underscore my country's engagement in addressing water challenges at both the multilateral and bilateral levels. As a member and host country of the Food and Agriculture Organization, Italy has actively participated in the establishment of the Global Framework on Water Scarcity, whose goal is to mobilize under a single integrated framework all actors dealing with water scarcity in its social, environmental and economic dimensions, with a focus on agriculture and taking into special account the effects of climate change. Furthermore, within the Global Framework, last April we adopted the Rome Statement on Water Scarcity in Agriculture, which, inter alia, underscores the importance of water governance and promoting integrated approaches to watersheds.

At the national level, Italy recently implemented a new strategy for basin management with the aim of promoting an integrated approach to water management and soil conservation. Through shared governance, public and private stakeholders join efforts in improving the maintenance of our river basins, fostering local development to create economic opportunity and mitigating hydrological risks. Such a cooperative approach, in a shared legal framework, is key to preventing water-related disputes. Moreover, Italy increased its development aid in 201. We will double that increase in 2017, and triple it in 2018. We want to ensure that those resources are directed towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and that they have an impact on capacity-building, including in the sustainable use of natural resources.

In conclusion, resolution 2349 (2017), on the Lake Chad basin region, recognized the adverse effects of climate change and ecological changes among other factors on the stability of the region, including through water scarcity, and emphasized the need for adequate risk assessment and risk-management strategies by Governments and the United Nations relating to those factors. We supported and co-sponsored the resolution because we believe in international cooperation, institution-building and partnerships. Benchmarks in that regard will allow us to achieve not only international water-related development goals, such as those set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, but also to tackle the root causes of conflict and avoid international confrontation.

Italy remains steadfast in these efforts for prevention and peacebuilding. Water, which has nurtured life and the human family, fostered civilizations and inspired many a creative mind, can also motivate our actions and be an instrument of peace.

Mr. Bessho (Japan): I would like to extend my warmest welcome to His Excellency President Morales Ayma and to thank him for convening this meeting on the important subject of preventive diplomacy and transboundary waters and for presiding over it himself personally. This is an excellent opportunity to build on the open debate, held under the Senegalese presidency, on water, peace and security last year (see S/PV.7818). I would also like to thank Secretary-General Guterres for his insightful remarks.

Sound and peaceful water resource development and management are crucial to achieving peace and prosperity. That was true in Japan throughout its history of nation-building and economic development. The same must have been the case in most countries. When several countries share rivers, lakes or aquifers, water management becomes a bigger challenge. Often, vying for scarce water resources has led to conflicts or perpetuated existing ones among different States, ethnic groups or communities. External factors such as climate change, population increases and environmental pollution may put further pressure on water resources, thereby exacerbating tension. However, in many instances, sharing water resources, with due respect for the needs of others, has brought adversaries together to achieve peace and prosperity. That is where we see opportunity for cooperation and preventive diplomacy. Cooperation among stakeholders in the area of water resources management can constitute a part of confidence-building measures and can prevent conflicts.

The international community can contribute to confidence-building by facilitating dialogue on transboundary water issues and by providing assistance to water-management projects. Japan has long supported countries in improving access to water, developing water management and governance capabilities and in dealing with water-related challenges to promote stability and de-escalate underlying tensions. Japan has been a proud partner of the Central Asian nations in promoting regional cooperation.

Water is one of the many areas of our cooperation. When Prime Minister Abe visited the region in 2015, he agreed with every leader of the five Central Asian States bilaterally that the issue of the efficient use of natural resources was essential for sustainable development. Prime Minister Abe expressed the intention of Japan to cooperate with regional countries for effective management and sustainable use of water resources in the region. For example, in Tajikistan, an upstream country, which depends heavily on water-sourced power generation, Japan has promoted a project to improve the efficiency of hydroelectricity utilization. In central Uzbekistan, a downstream country, Japan provides assistance for improving irrigation systems so that water can be supplied in a more stable manner for agriculture, while at the same time cutting electricity consumption used for pumps. Japan believes that improving water management in both upstream and downstream countries benefits both groups of countries, thereby contributing not only to sustainable water use in the region but also to regional confidence-building.

Turning to Africa, in the Sudan, Japan provides assistance to improving the water supply in the eastern region and to developing policy recommendations on integrated water resource management so that water-related challenges can be dealt with in a more systematic manner, based on data.

Japan also takes a multisectoral approach based on water provision and capacity-building in agriculture, health and rural governance. Considering that water has been one of the sources of conflict in Darfur and other regions, we believe that assistance in the areas of water resource development and management increases confidence in post-conflict reconstruction efforts and leads to stability within a society.

Conflict can be prevented by developing areas of practical cooperation and building confidence. I have touched upon just a few examples of such cooperation by my country. When transboundary water management becomes a diplomatic issue between nations, it goes without saying that seeking peaceful solutions is important. Interested countries may learn from the success stories of others that are being shared today. Japan will continue to support countries in improving water management and access as building block for sustainable peace and security.

Mr. Aboulatta (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, let me thank you, Mr. President, and your country for the initiative of convening this important

meeting. Egypt believes that competition over limited resources, in particular shared water resources, may increase the chances of conflict, especially given the negative impact of climate change. That is already evident in a number of conflicts on our agenda in the Security Council.

Egypt has raised its water scarcity problem at many international and regional forums. Egypt has a single source of fresh water, namely, the Nile River. Egypt derives 97 per cent of its water resources from the Nile River and is entirely dependent upon it. Egypt is part of the dry belt area of North Africa, where it rarely rains. Egypt is also water deficient; it uses 102 billion cubic metres per annum, whereas its total available water supply from conventional resources is 58.8 billion cubic metres per annum. That includes Egypt's share from the Nile River, as well as water from rain, floods and aquifers. Egypt is below the water poverty line, as the per capita share decreased to 625 cubic metres per annum and is likely to decrease further to 470 cubic metres per annum when the population reaches 120 million by 2025.

Egypt believes that water should be a tool for cooperation, development and water security. Hence, together with its brotherly countries in the Nile River basin, in 1999 we launched the Nile Basin Initiative, which seeks to enhance cooperation among all the countries of the basin to achieve common goals and interests. The Initiative has been highly successful. We are now seeking to consolidate our gains and restore its inclusive nature, following Egypt's suspension of its participation in the Initiative's activities.

It is worth noting that Egypt believes that the establishment of a Nile basin commission should be based on sound principles that respect the interests of all countries and are in conformity with the established rules of international law. Such a commission should include all Nile basin States, without exception, in order to achieve the desired goals. However, we have a number of concerns regarding the incomplete framework agreement, including the fact that the agreement recognizes the violation of the principle of consensus that led Egypt to suspend its participation in the technical activities of the Initiative since 2010.

Egypt still believes in the importance of serious and constructive dialogue to restore the inclusive nature of the Initiative and to settle the outstanding disputes. Egypt welcomed President Museveni's kind invitation to hold the Nile Basin States Summit on 17 June in an endeavour to break the current impasse on this vital issue.

Egypt believes that cooperation is the optimal way to determine the best use of the Nile River. Such cooperation can take the form of bilateral projects with Nile River countries in order to make use of the water without compromising the interests of other countries. The Declaration of Principles on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam was concluded among Egypt, Ethiopia and the Sudan on that basis. We would like to stress the importance of all parties' full compliance with and implementation of the provisions of that declaration. Egypt believes in the vital role of preventive diplomacy in preventing future conflicts on shared water resources through the following tools.

First, we must follow the two principles of "no harm" and "prior notification" among co-riparian countries. In that regard, when countries upstream develop projects on a shared water course without rigorous studies showing the potential harm to countries downstream and means of adaptation, by so doing they are flagrantly violating those two principles.

Second, States must honour their obligations under international law, including bilateral and multilateral agreements on transboundary water resources. They must refrain from unilaterally developing projects on a shared water course without consulting with other riparian States. It is worth noting that undertaking consultations in accordance with legal rules and in good faith will be for the good of all and will ensure the sustainable use of the shared water course.

Third, everyone should know that any unilateral measures on shared water resources will not produce the desired outcomes of a given project, but rather harm the interests of other riparian countries in various ways, such as a decline in the arable land area, a reduction in energy production, increased environmental degradation and poor water quality, rendering it unfit for human use. We should be cautious and seek to prevent this from happening in order to avoid internationalizing these issues, which will be inevitable in the case of a conflict that threatens international peace and security.

Fourth, we should avoid interpreting the principle of the fair and equitable use of shared water resources in a way that harms other riparian countries. How can a certain usage be described as fair and equitable if it

harms the interests of other countries, in particular those downstream, and threatens their stability and security?

Fifth, other non-State international actors, in particular international donors, banks and construction companies, should respect international standards regarding water facilities on transboundary watercourses. Such facilities should not be funded or erected without the prior approval of all riparian countries, in particular those downstream, in order to avoid disputes and prevent future conflict among riparian countries.

Sixth, information should be exchanged on successful international expertise in the field of shared water resource management. A comprehensive confidence-building approach should be adopted in good faith, avoiding any unilateral measure that would harm not only downstream countries, but the hydrological cycle of the shared watercourses.

Seventh, the United Nations should play a clearer role in developing cooperation mechanisms among riparian countries along international rivers, building capacity to optimize the use of water and working to prevent water-related conflicts. This includes raising awareness about international law principles governing the use of international rivers and enhancing compliance with these principles.

Water can contribute to or threaten international peace and security, and therefore requires further attention so that related problems can be addressed in a timely manner. Egypt is therefore of the view that it is high time for the Security Council to take action and produce an outcome that reflects all of the important points to which I have alluded in my statement today. We call on the Security Council to begin consultations on producing an outcome of this important meeting that would form the basis for future Security Council resolutions or debates on preventing conflicts that might arise in relation to shared water resources.

Mr. Ilichev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are pleased to see you, Sir, in the chair of the President of the Security Council.

We thank the Secretary-General for his briefing.

In recent times, we have heard about the issue of water here at the Security Council with enviable regularity. We agree that the issues of access to water resources, their sustainable use, recovery and preservation play an important role because of the timeless importance of water to life, human and economic activity and to maintaining ecosystem balance. As we see it, the discussions and debates on those issues have been valuable and have reaffirmed our understanding that the time has come to move from words to action and to take specific measures that could alleviate the international community's concerns about water. It would be appropriate to turn to the long-standing outputs of specialized bodies, both within the United Nations and outside of it, that day in and day out use statistical and analytical data and the practical experience of interacting with Member States to implement targeted strategies in the area of water resources that take specific political, geographical and other factors into consideration.

There are many solutions on the surface. They include raising the level of social, economic and scientific and technological development of countries, strengthening their potential in the area of water-resource management and extending financial and technical assistance, while bearing in mind specific needs and development strategies. All of those measures, insofar as they apply to water management, are listed as principal ways of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development. They open up additional opportunities for further cooperation among States on the issue of water resources, while balancing the three dimensions of sustainable development. The International Decade for Action, "Water for Sustainable Development", 2018-2028, whose proclamation was supported by more than 100 countries, including Russia, can and should become a platform and a catalyst for the implementation of those measures.

A major source of help in the area of water resource management are regional and international legal documents and mechanisms, such as the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes, the Lake Chad Basin Commission, the Mekong River Basin Commission and others. In our view, the main issue lies in the fact that the potential of the existing specialized platforms and mechanisms is unjustifiably underestimated and not fully utilized. Instead of guiding countries towards taking mutually acceptable decisions within specialized organizations, we are seeing increasingly frequent attempts to situate transboundary water resources within the context of discussing issues of peace and

security. That could lead to their being regulated pursuant to the top-down principle and could also harm the interests of countries concerned. In that regard, we also recall that water, like other national resources, is a subject of national sovereignty.

With regard to the possibility of using preventive diplomacy on water resources, over the decade of its existence preventive diplomacy has proven to be a good tool for reducing tensions when they arise for specific reasons and for guiding situations along an alternative, peaceful course. The main characteristic of preventive diplomacy, and precisely what makes it so useful, is the fact that it is used exclusively at the request of the State concerned and in line with that State's national strategies. That precludes any automatic recourse to the mechanism and, at the same time, ensures that the sovereignty of the country and its primary right to prevent conflict and overcome its consequences are respected. Therefore, any attempt to dictate under the pretext of preventive assistance could discredit the very idea of so-called preventive diplomacy and result in growing distrust in it on the part of those countries that find themselves a step away from an armed conflict.

Mr. Klein (United States of America): I thank you, Sir, for this initiative on security and water, which is a good follow-up after the meeting held last November (see S/PV.7818) under Senegal's presidency.

I too would like to thank the Secretary-General for his insightful briefing.

As we have heard today, growing demand, rampant pollution and changing water conditions contribute to water insecurity in many regions of the world. Water is becoming an increasing factor in migration, civil unrest and State failure. Transboundary water problems are particularly challenging but there are successful models for dealing with them throughout the world. One such example is the growing cooperation among Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia on the Sava River.

Soon after the stability pact for South-Eastern Europe was signed in 1999, those countries began to work together to improve the joint management of the Sava River. With backing from their political leadership and a broad base of support from external partners, cooperation began in 2001 and culminated in the establishment of the International Sava River Basin Commission in 2005. It is one of the first regional agreements put into place after the wars in the Balkans ended. It demonstrated the genuine potential of water to strengthen regional ties. It was a common project on navigation use and conservation that improved people's lives and promoted peace and security.

The United States brings a similar viewpoint to water issues in our own neighbourhood. As we said during the open debate on water, peace and security in November 2016 (see S/PV.7818), for more than 100 years the United States has had close relationships with both our neighbours on water management. The United States, Canada and Mexico have benefited. My country has a long history of supporting cooperation on shared waters. We are a contributor to the Shared Water Partnership, multi-donor group managed by the Stockholm International Water Institute, which Minister Lövin mentioned. The Partnership aims to build political will for cooperation on water worldwide and to support Government-led efforts to solve difficult transboundary water challenges. We strongly encourage other donor countries to support the Shared Waters Partnership, and for countries in need to make use of the Partnership so that it might support their efforts to cooperate on water.

While there is no standard approach to solving disputes related to water, our experience points to four key ingredients for preventive diplomacy to address transboundary water issues. The first ingredient involves increasing the capacity of Member States and stakeholders to better understand and engage on transboundary water challenges. Countries require the ability to negotiate, resolve disputes and implement agreements relating to their water resources. Secondly, there must be sound data to establish a common understanding of the available water resources and the potential benefits and costs of development. All parties in a potential dispute should have the same understanding of what is at stake. Thirdly, it is important to incentivize cooperation through investments in joint projects that demonstrate the benefits of working together. The final and most important ingredient, in our view, is political will. Political leaders should make cooperation a priority, set clear goals and empower technical experts, which is in line with what the Secretary-General outlined in his statement today.

Making progress on how we address transboundary water issues should not be episodic. We need to build on our successes so that countries and their people realize that, whether it is across sectors or across borders, cooperation on water opens up new opportunities for

growth and reduces risks for all of us. I would like to thank you again, Mr. President, for organizing this important debate.

Mr. Liu Jieyi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China conveys its deepest condolences to the victims of the terrorist attacks that recently took place in Afghanistan and the United Kingdom. We hope that the injured have a swift recovery. China strongly condemns terrorist acts in all their forms.

China commends Bolivia's initiative to convene this high-level open briefing on preventive diplomacy and transboundary waters. China welcomes President Morales Ayma as he presides over the meeting. We also thank Secretary-General Guterres for his briefing.

Water is essential for human survival and the sustainable development of economies and societies. Transboundary water resources affect the common interests of river basin countries or countries within the lower or upper reach of river basins. Enhanced transboundary water resource cooperation is conducive to promoting regional security and stability, ecological conservation and sustainable development. I would like to emphasize the following three points.

First, it is important to strengthen development and the protection of transboundary water resources. We must avoid conflicts by utilizing water resources reasonably. Countries in transboundary water basins should bear in mind the importance of safeguarding regional peace and security in the spirit of win-win cooperation through various means, such as improving disaster prevention and increasing agricultural efficiency. We must take an integrated approach towards soundly developing, reasonably allocating, conserving and efficiently using transboundary water resources, with a view to comprehensively enhancing our ability to ensure water security. We must enable the sharing of water resources in order to promote win-win cooperation.

Secondly, enhanced dialogue and consultations among countries in river basins represent effective means of managing transboundary water resources. As parties directly involved in transboundary water issues, countries in river basins should make an effort to build and improve coordination mechanisms. They must step up their communications with respect to transboundary waters, foster mutual trust and deal with disputes in a timely and proper manner. The United Nations and regional organizations should fully respect the wills of the countries concerned. In view of the specific contexts on the ground, they should play a constructive role of promotion. They should help those countries in river basins defuse tensions and build consensus in order to make transboundary water resources a subject of regional cooperation.

Thirdly, we should deepen international cooperation on international water resources and step up capacity-building for developing countries. It is important to strengthen international water resource cooperation arrangements. We must put into place a solid legal framework for transboundary water cooperation. We should further support the United Nations High-level Working Group on Water Resources, the High-level Panel on Water Resources and peace, and other mechanisms in their work, actively provide technical assistance to developing countries and improve water resource management and the sustainable use of water, all with a view to fostering synergy among the international community with respect to water.

Great emphasis should be placed on addressing issues of water shortages in Africa. We should support African countries in cooperating on transboundary water resources and help them build water conservancy infrastructure, all in order to bring concrete benefits to African people. The protection of water resources should be incorporated into the framework of peacebuilding in order to ensure water security in post-conflict situations. Along with the rest of the international community, China stands ready to continue promoting the sustainable development and utilization of water resources so that transboundary waters can serve as pillars of cooperation and peace, thereby making even greater contributions to the prosperity and development of humankind.

Mr. Yelchenko (Ukraine): To echo others, I would like to begin on a sad note by extending my sincere condolences to our colleagues from Afghanistan and the United Kingdom, whose countries have once again been the targets of cowardly and senseless terrorist attacks.

At the outset, let me thank the Bolivian presidency for convening the today's meeting on such important topic. The World Economic Forum's *2017 Global Risks Report* ranks water crises as a top-10 global risk. The report links potential water crises to a cluster of environmental risks, notably extreme weather events, failures of climate change mitigation and adaptation, as well as to migration and conflicts.

As of today, nearly 1 billion people in the world are in danger of experiencing shortages of food and water. Moreover, 90 per cent of the world's current population live in countries that share rivers, lakes or aquifers with other countries. Those transboundary watercourses are overexploited and vulnerable to pollution. That all serves to underline the fact that transboundary water cooperation is essential for maintaining national, regional and global stability. There is no doubt that many countries and peoples, similar to thousands of years ago, are facing fierce competition over access to water resources. In regions where water is both scarce and in high demand, the problem may trigger a significant decrease in economic growth, leading to uneven distribution of limited water resources, lower living standards, rising unemployment and humanitarian needs. All this may result in forced migration or even cause armed conflicts.

We fully share the view that such current trends clearly require that Governments, the United Nations system, civil society, the private sector and local authorities work together to address holistically and in a comprehensive manner this challenge and mitigate the associated risks.

To achieve this outcome, Ukraine advocates strengthening river basin cooperation and international partnerships with regard to sustainable water management and environmental protection as well as the transfer of affordable technologies on water and energy. We also endorse the developmental approach of acquiring technical knowledge and technological capacity through education and the relevant research activities, particularly in developing countries.

We are convinced that progress in upholding peace and stability in the area of water security also depends on adequate management of the growing demand for resources under the conditions of reduced supply combined with population growth. To minimize the gap between supply and demand in access to fresh water, the international community will require effective security and developmental strategies for resource management and conservation.

We believe that creating effective legal and political frameworks is crucial for preventing conflict and fostering cooperation on transboundary water issues. It is only natural that many, if not all, colleagues around this table referred in their statements to successful examples of regional cooperation in this field.

As a State party to the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes, or Water Convention, adopted in 1992, Ukraine supports and promotes knowledge- and experience-sharing as regards the water and security nexus.

In this regard, it is also important to note that together with 13 other countries and the European Union, my country is actively working on the sustainable and equitable water management of the Danube river through the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River. That organization has grown into one of the largest and most active international bodies with river-basin management expertise in the world; it is an excellent example of regional water diplomacy.

Another good example is the involvement of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in water-related environmental and security issues in Central Asia, a useful tool of preventive diplomacy.

We firmly believe that our desire and will to protect the planet must be translated into action. For this, States Members of the United Nations need to move from declaring their aspirations to taking concrete steps to secure the future we want for present and future generations.

Mr. Rycroft (United Kingdom): At the outset, let me thank Council members for their words of condolence and support here and elsewhere following the horrific attack in London this weekend. The perpetrators sought to terrorize us, to divide us, but make no mistake: they will fail. Together we will defeat them, and we will need Security Council unity and activism against this terrible scourge.

Turning to this afternoon's meeting, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his briefing, and I want to join others in paying tribute to you, Your Excellency President Morales, for your leadership in bringing this crucial issue of transboundary water security to the Security Council. It is an issue that we used not to discuss in this Chamber, but it is one that warrants our fullest attention. The stakes are high: more than three quarters of States Members of the United Nations share river basins with another country, and more than 2 billion people live in shared river basins in the developing world.

Sadly, we know what can happen when the water runs dry. In Somalia, drought is driving the acute food shortage that threatens to tip over once again into famine. One powerful lesson from the last famine in Somalia six years ago was that famine is not simply about food but also about water. In north-eastern Nigeria, lack of water is exacerbating the man-made crisis, as we saw for ourselves when we visited in March. Thousands of displaced people, the majority of whom are women and children, have become sick from diseases spread by dirty water and poor hygiene as the conflict continues.

We have to act, and we have agreed to act. Through the global goals, we all committed to deliver improved water security, improved access to drinking water and sanitation, and stronger transboundary water management.

And yet the outlook for 2030 is fragile. We are simply not on track. The United Nations estimates that by the time we are supposed to have achieved Sustainable Development Goal 6, demand for water in many developing countries will outstrip supply by 40 per cent. If such scarcity is combined with weak governance, population growth, migration and climate change, we may face a potential upsurge in global conflicts in future. This, therefore, is a clear call for preventive diplomacy, as so many of my colleagues have already said. All of us in this Chamber have a part to play.

In South Asia, for example, the United Kingdom has provided $30 million towards water governance over the past five years. One billion people across Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Nepal and Pakistan rely heavily on just three rivers, and, despite facing similar problems posed by water demand and climate change, regional collaboration between these countries is limited. That is why we have supported a regional approach to these rivers in order to address the shared challenges of development and climate change. We are working with the World Bank's South Asia Water Initiative, bringing together different disciplines and experiences, technical and political, across the region, so that together we can identify and resolve challenges affecting these transboundary waters.

But to tackle this problem on a global scale, we will need more than bilateral or regional action. We will need to work together, through this institution and others. Holding this meeting is an important step, but this effort needs to be sustained. We cannot solve it through one meeting a year.

The Group of 20 (G-20) also has a role to play, including through incentivizing water cooperation. This is not an issue for just the developing world. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the Global Water Partnership estimate that water insecurity costs the global economy $500 billion every year. And yet we fall a long way short of meeting the $198 billion of global investment that is needed every year for water governance and infrastructure. So we need to see investment in institutions and infrastructure to deliver improved water security within States and between States. Building effective institutions and delivering better governance is just as critical as building infrastructure. The G-20 can play a critical role through diplomatic efforts, development cooperation and harnessing the potential of the private sector, Governments and communities to mobilize investment in water security.

Finally, if we are to make progress on this issue before 2030, we need to see the bigger picture. Across the world, climate change is undermining water security. In almost all climate-change scenarios, the world's driest regions become drier, and across the globe flooding will become more common. If we are not taking steps to address climate change, we are fighting with one hand tied behind our back.

The Paris Agreement provides the right global framework for protecting the prosperity and security of future generations while keeping energy affordable and secure for our citizens and businesses. The United Kingdom played a major role in securing the Paris Agreement, and I am proud to restate in this Chamber today that we are wholly committed to it.

Mr. Rosselli (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is an honour for my delegation to be taking the floor at this meeting, which you, Mr. President, have convened.

I would like at the outset to express the solidarity of the people and the Government of Uruguay with our brother peoples and Governments of Afghanistan and the United Kingdom, who have been struck once again by cowardly terrorist attacks.

Mr. President, I would also like to congratulate you on having convened today's meeting and thank you for your statement. We also thank the Secretary-General for his briefing.

Historically, transboundary waters have served the development of nations, either as navigational routes for the transport of people and goods or as vectors for the production of energy or the extraction of natural resources, through fishing, for example. Nevertheless, these waters — which down the centuries have united the peoples who share their shores — have on occasion become a source of friction and conflict between them.

Water does not fall within the set of resources defined as a global public good, but is rather a scarce natural resource whose management can stoke political sensitivities at the international level. Water stress is a reality that may well continue to worsen and bring in its wake an exacerbating of existing tensions, resulting in shared river basins and aquifers generating hostility rather than cooperation if appropriate policies are not adopted. In order to understand the sensitive nature of the issue, it should suffice to note that a significant part of the world's population currently lacks access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation.

Governments should adopt a cooperative approach to the peaceful management of transboundary water flows. Uruguay therefore firmly believes in this cooperative approach, which is why we support negotiation as a tool for reach agreements that guarantee the peaceful use of these waters. Accordingly, we are party to treaties that exemplify cooperative management of these waterways.

By way of example, I would point to the border treaty between Uruguay and Brazil of 12 October 1851, and its successor treaties, in which the midline, talweg and joint ownership or basin regimes were established for shared river and lake resources. These treaties set up binational commissions for the management of river and lake resources, such as the Brazilian-Uruguayan Joint Commission for the Development of Mirim Lagoon Basin and the Cuareim River, and more recently, in 2010, the Agreement on River And Lake Transport on the Uruguay-Brazil Waterway.

With respect to the Argentine Republic, through the Uruguay River Treaty of 1961 and the 1973 Treaty concerning the River Plate and its Maritime Front, the borders were settled between both countries and statutes corresponding to the use and management of the waters were promulgated. These legal instruments are the fruit of a pragmatic approach to finding innovative and creative solutions designed to adequately address our respective interests. This approach has led to the establishment of a legal architecture of precise balances and reciprocal concessions. In both, the borders are set forth in meticulous detail based on criteria using the midline or the talweg systems, depending on the section of the river and respecting the way the watercourse winds as it flows, in order to demarcate the islands, thereby arriving at innovative solutions by which some of those islands are under the sovereignty of one or the other of the parties, although physically located on the other side of the borderline.

These instruments define the exclusive jurisdiction of each party and the waters of common use where the navigation channels are located, and provide for the unrestricted freedom of navigation and special norms for channels and for fishing, inter alia. The texts of these treaties also provide for the founding of binational bodies for the administration, oversight and use of the rivers, which led to the establishment, respectively, of the Administrative Commission for the Uruguay River and Administrative Commission for the River Plate, the latter with headquarters on Isla Martín García. This island, which falls under Argentine jurisdiction despite its proximity to Uruguay, is the headquarters of the Administrative Commission and has been declared an exclusive natural reserve for the conservation and preservation of indigenous fauna and flora. Both Commissions adopt decisions by consensus and, using this framework, it has always been possible for agreements to be reached, with the sole exception of a dispute between the two countries that was resolved after being brought before the International Court of Justice.

Pursuant to these agreements, joint monitoring of water quality and navigability of watercourses is carried out and permits for commercial activity and construction for each party are granted, taking into consideration the protection of water resources as the lifeblood of the riparian economy as well as the protection of wildlife and the diversity of local species. It is also important to highlight that in 2010 Uruguay signed the Agreement on the Guaraní Aquifer with Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay in order to promote the conservation of the aquifer, provide environmental protection of the area, and guarantee the multiple, rational, sustainable and equitable use of its water resources.

In terms of transboundary waters, the best form of preventive diplomacy is the one that focuses on strengthening the legal frameworks that regulate them and on setting up the necessary institutional framework

for their management and administration through dialogue and cooperation between the parties.

Mr. Alemu (Ethiopia): We wish to express solidarity with the United Kingdom and Afghanistan. Of course, the United Kingdom knows that we stand shoulder to shoulder with it during these difficult times.

It is indeed a great opportunity for me to be able to extend a warm welcome to you, Sir, and to thank you for presiding over today's important meeting, and we thank the Bolivian delegation for organizing it. We are also grateful to the Secretary-General for his briefing, which, as usual, was very insightful.

Mr. President, water is, as you so eloquently highlighted, a vital natural resource, indispensable to realizing sustainable peace and development. Unfortunately, due to population growth, urbanization, industrialization and climate change, water scarcity is projected to rise. Therefore, in an era of water stress, the way States manage their transboundary waters will be extremely crucial to realizing peace, stability and development.

We are firmly convinced that transboundary rivers and lakes could and should be, as you stressed, Sir, a source of genuine cooperation and partnership between Governments and peoples. Of course, affirming this in theory is by far much easier than carrying out the same in practice. The latter requires overcoming obstacles to a win-win approach that are political, psychological and cultural, as well as other types of impediments that affect the development of realistic partnerships that accord with the reality on the ground.

It is therefore self-evident that the mismanagement of transboundary waters in the ways just indicated could lead to political tension and conflict. This is not naturally ordained by a higher power, however; it is not ineluctable. What is in fact natural and in accord with the interest of all concerned is cooperation, which is facilitated by the natural bond among peoples that transboundary rivers help to engender. But the realization of this in itself requires wisdom, realism and commitment to a spirit of cooperation that brooks no desire to monopolize transboundary water resources.

The colonial history of Africa makes this issue all the more critical. Our strong conviction of the critical importance of cooperation as a more important theme whenever the topic is addressed is borne out of past experiences. History has shown that water can be instrumental in transforming a potentially conflictive situation into one of cooperation and partnership. Creating and building a win-win partnership is indeed possible, as long as States accept that transboundary resources must be used equitably and reasonably. With the right political will, unwavering commitment to continued dialogue to solve disagreements and participatory mechanisms, transboundary rivers create favourable conditions for peace, economic cooperation and regional integration which could benefit all riparian States.

That is why studies demonstrate that, despite the fiery political rhetoric, no State has gone to war specifically over water resources, and there are more examples of cooperation than of conflict, with hundreds of agreements negotiated and signed by States, resulting in productive and well-functioning bilateral and regional mechanisms. It is for these reasons that we remain committed to and actively pursue a path of cooperation in bilateral and regional transboundary water management issues.

Ethiopia strongly believes in the utilization of transboundary waters, including the Nile River, as a source of regional cooperation for shared development. For Ethiopia, the Nile basin is a natural endowment that belongs to all riparian States, which should lead to strengthened friendship and greater understanding. Let me take this opportunity to reaffirm the political commitment of Ethiopia to continuing the regional dialogue with a genuine and lasting commitment to shared prosperity and overcoming poverty. This is also in conformity with the 2030 Agenda, whose major clarion call is leaving no one behind. That is why, in fact, the topic is best addressed by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council.

All the same, the Nile Basin initiative is an example of cooperation and partnership that we have in our part of the world whose ultimate objective is achieving harmonious utilization of the river. The riparian States negotiated the Nile River Basin Cooperative Framework Agreement for almost 13 years and now the Agreement is signed by six riparian States and ratified by three States. It is our sincere hope that once the remaining three riparian States ratify the Agreement, a permanent River Basin Commission will be established.

The cooperation between Ethiopia, Egypt and the Sudan and the signing of the Declaration of Principles by the leaders of the three easterly countries is also

another manifestation of regional cooperation which needs to be enhanced further. No doubt, there are differences between upstream and downstream States of the Nile, but the most important thing is that we have a mechanism for dialogue anchored in the principle of mutual understanding and respect. We believe such bilateral and regional governance mechanisms should be allowed to develop and consolidate within their own regional contexts. Internationalizing these issues will not help; it would instead complicate matters undermining efforts at the bilateral and regional levels.

The 2030 Agenda provides us another historical opportunity to ensure access to clean water for all. The timely and full implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is the best tool to prevent conflict and ensure inclusive development for all. In this context, enhanced international cooperation would be indispensable to fully implement SDG 6 and other water and water-related Development Goals and Targets in developing countries, particularly in least developed countries.

Ethiopia has been actively and constructively engaged in water dialogues that Member States have undertaken this year in accordance with General Assembly resolution 71/222 on the International Decade for Action, "Water for Sustainable Development", 2018—2028, which it co-sponsored. It is such kind of development-oriented dialogues, together with adequate and sustained financial, technological and capacity-building support for the most vulnerable countries, that could bring concrete solutions for the water-stressed world. This is how we all could prevent conflicts and promote durable peace and security.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, allow me to express France's deep sympathy for and solidarity with the United Kingdom and Afghanistan in the wake of the terrible attacks that struck London and Kabul.

I would like to thank President Morales for his presence at today's meeting and express our gratitude to the Bolivian presidency for this relevant initiative on the topic of preventive diplomacy and transboundary waters and congratulate it on the high quality of the concept note, which clearly describes the problem we are discussing today. I would like to also thank Senegal, who, in November 2016, had the excellent idea of organizing a debate in the Security Council on the topic of water, peace and security (see S/PV.7818). The discussion that we are having today owes much to this felicitous initiative undertaken by Senegal.

I shall limit myself to three brief observations, which I think are important.

My first comment is that water is a vital resource at the heart of development and human rights, but which also touches on security and peacekeeping. The debate on transboundary waters is essential because it is urgent and legitimate for the Security Council to address these issues.

Access to water and sanitation was recognized as a human right by the United Nations in 2010 in a compromise resolution, which owes a great deal to the efforts undertaken by the Bolivian presidency. Many human activities depend on water resources and, at the same time, global demand for water has grown considerably, which is leading to an increase in pressure being placed on water resources. These tensions will continue to rise in the upcoming decades. The World Bank estimates that, as a result of population growth, the water needed for agriculture is expected to increase by 50 per cent between now and 2050 and water needed for energy production will increase by 85 per cent.

The pressure on water resources has major consequences in terms of security. While environmental factors are rarely the sole cause of conflict, it is undeniable that access to and the use of natural resources can contribute to the outbreak of violence. According to the United Nations Environment Programme, at least 40 per cent of the conflicts that have broken out over the past 60 years are somehow related to natural resources, such as gold, minerals and oil, but also fertile land and water.

Conflicts related to sharing water can arise locally among consumers, as well as among States at a transboundary level. With regard to both surface or underground water, conflicts related to transboundary waters are frequent. They lead to the unequal management of water resources and punish in particular the poorest populations. Upstream countries put significant pressure on downstream countries and too often impose their rules. This then becomes a serious issue of justice.

Water is a real factor of stability and fairness. It therefore deserves our full attention and should not be neglected in the anticipation and settlement of disputes. Too often a source of division, water resources can

and must become a factor for cooperation and peace between States.

My second point is that there are effective international tools that must promote in order to prevent water conflicts. I am of course thinking of the two major multilateral conventions that should guide all our action in this area: the New York Convention on the Law of the Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses and the Helsinki Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes. These two conventions are, to my mind, complementary and not rivals.

The Helsinki Convention is, in some respects, more ambitious than the New York Convention. It is mandatory, it covers groundwater and goes further in terms of protecting the environment. It also provides a mechanism for dialogue and arbitration — a veritable tool for facilitating and pacifying water management in the context of tensions between riparian States on the same river, lake or aquifer. I recall that the Convention has been open to all States Members of the United Nations since March 2016.

The principles underlying these two texts are fundamentally similar. They are essentially the principle of reasonable and equitable use of transboundary waters, and an undertaking not to cause significant harm to ones neighbours. Both texts also provide a very comprehensive toolkit, detailed and adapted recommendations, and good practices based on long experience. Let us learn to make use of these tools, recommendations and good practices.

I should like to add an important point about the New York and Helsinki texts. These conventions set down key principles but leave much leeway for the parties concerned and do not impinge on the sovereignty of States. I believe that this is a great strength; conflicts are resolved much better on a local or regional basis. We need to promote governance bodies based on river basins, as local parties are best able to assess their needs and discuss the equitable sharing of their waters in order to ensure sustainable and peaceful access to their resources. To that end, we must facilitate dialogue, propose appropriate tools and support cooperative approaches proposed by the parties on the ground but in no case make decisions on their behalf.

My third and last remark is of a more general nature. Climate change exacerbates most environmental issues and makes development issues more complex. Water is no exception. Water resources are becoming increasingly scarce and under increasing pressure due to the combined effect of global warming, population explosion and increasing water demands. The cost of access to the resource will rise and tensions will intensify. Some 90 per cent of natural disasters are related to water. Floods, droughts, storms — these disasters tend to multiply as a result of climate change. These constraints affect the living conditions of human beings; cause or contribute to serious humanitarian crises, such as famine; and give rise to conflicts among neighboring States. Water issues are thus closely linked to the challenge of climate change. It therefore seems to me that in order to prevent water-related conflicts, the challenge of climate change must also be met and, to that end, Paris Agreement on Climate Change must be implemented.

In conclusion, I pay tribute to the Secretary-General, who, with great foresight, has stressed the need to decompartmentalize the approaches to sustainable development, human rights and peace and security. The issue of water illustrates with particular force the concrete imperative of a comprehensive approach. We must anticipate water-related crises, strengthen dialogue and promote the creation of sustainable partnerships by focusing on a long-term vision. There is an urgent need to preserve our water resources so as to preserve our future and that of our children in a peaceful and sustainable environment. This is one of the critical issues of our time, and its importance will only grow in the coming years. France will remaining resolutely committed in that regard.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): There are no more speakers on my list, but I should like to take this opportunity to make a further statement.

Some participants today have not enjoyed being addressed as brother or sister, but I wish to tell them that we come from the Earth and shall return to the Earth. We are all children of Mother Earth, and as such we are all siblings. No human being comes from the sun or the moon; we all come from the Earth. That is why I use the terms "brother" and "sister". I apologize if I have upset anyone.

I would also like to say that I have been surprised by various statements concerning cooperation and collaboration. I come from a very humble background. Sometimes, when we hear certain statements from certain countries, we do not feel secure, but having

heard so much talk of cooperation and collaboration, I feel that the Security Council is genuinely concerned about maintaining peace, social justice and security in the world.

Whenever a coup d'état takes place, mistrust arises. As an international Organization, we have the responsibility to defend democratically elected Governments and Presidents. The largest number of coup d'états in Latin America have taken place in Bolivia. When armed troops took control in my country, three Generals became President in one year. I did not wish to discuss the political situation in my country, but I feel that it is a good way to close.

I have been surprised by the various statements on the issue of water, with respect to which we must cooperate and work together in joint projects and investment, which will be of great help to our peoples. I therefore thank all speakers for their important statements. We are very diverse. Listening to speakers experess their opinions in the Security Council, I sense our physical, economic, geographic, ideological and pragmatic diversity. It is our right to be diverse, but whatever differences we may have, I feel that it is important to work together to the benefit of the most neglected peoples of the world.

That is my experience as a person of very humble origins who knows what it means to live in poverty. That is why I believe we must maintain our plurinational States, a plurinational America and a plurinational planet. We are diverse, and we must understand each other in our diversity. For me and many others, the synonym of diversity is plurinationality in which we all enjoy the same rights and duties for the good of society.

The meeting rose at 5.20 p.m.